

## Advice and Dissent

### Carter wants a tighter ship

For more than two years, Jimmy Carter has tolerated his Cabinet members' shortcomings, forgiven their mistakes and ignored the advice of outsiders that he shake up the top level of his Administration or even fire some people. But now Carter is beginning to have second thoughts. Reports TIME Washington Bureau Chief Robert Ajemian: "According to close aides, Carter is dissatisfied with the quality of certain advice and with some of the decision making beneath him. Mindful of his wobbly standing in the polls, he is determined to improve the Cabinet's performance."

One result is that, to assure loyalty, the President has taken more control over agency appointments. For example, Commerce Secretary Juanita Kreps wanted to promote Frank Weil to be her under secretary, but was told to find someone who was a stronger supporter of Carter. Weil lined up endorsements from several Senators and Cabinet members, but the President held firm.

In addition, Carter is showing increasing irritation with aides who seem unprepared or uncertain. After hearing several high-level staffers in the Oval Office debate how he should announce his energy policy, Carter angrily shut off the discussion and bluntly ordered, "Get your act together." Now, say aides, he intends to put similar pressure on top-level officials outside the White House. Among them:

► James Schlesinger. "He feels shafted by Schlesinger," says a top presidential aide. The President believes that the Energy Secretary has shown insensitivity toward Iran and bollixed negotiations for Mexican gas by insulting Mexico's envoys. Carter no longer relies on Schlesinger alone for advice on energy policy. In preparing for his energy speech earlier this month, the President reached around the Energy Secretary and invited all Cabinet members to chip in with ideas. Last week, Carter named Domestic Adviser Stuart Eizenstat to head the Administration team that will lobby for the windfall profits tax in Congress, and deliberately left out Schlesinger.

► Ray Marshall. Administration officials complain that the Labor Secretary has been a dead loss at negotiating with the Teamsters Union. As a result, Carter has had to deal directly with Union President Frank Fitzsimmons. Carter made some headway with Fitzsimmons but was unable to head off the Teamsters strike.

► Stansfield Turner. The CIA director looked better to Carter in Navy whites than he does in charge of U.S. intelligence. Carter is now said to agree with critics that his Annapolis classmate is too much of a lightweight and military bureaucrat for the job. Carter gives higher marks to Turner's deputy, Frank Carlucci. But because of the frequent turnover of CIA directors—five in six years—the President is reluctant to make a change.

► Alfred Kahn. The loose tongue of the chairman of the Council on Wage and Price Stability is increasingly bothersome to the White House. Within two working days, Press Secretary Jody Powell twice had to "clarify" Kahn's statements. First the inflation czar told a congressional committee that he did not favor Carter's plan to decontrol oil prices. Soon afterward presidential aides apparently changed Kahn's mind. Said Kahn: "I am now 100% behind the decision to decontrol. I always have been 49½% behind it." Then he told an AFL-CIO rally that failure of voluntary wage-price guidelines to slow inflation would lead to either mandatory controls or a recession. Powell had to make clear to reporters that the President disagreed and that Kahn was not signaling an imminent change in policy. Said a White House aide: "Kahn does a wonderful job, but he's too damn flip."

Carter, in fact, is dissatisfied with his economic policymaking in general. One problem is that he refuses to rely on only a single adviser. As a result, his views have often shifted from one position to another as he listens first to Charles Schultze,

chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, then to Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal and finally to several other aides. Moreover, the economic advisers are unable to work well together. Kahn does not get along with his council's director, Barry Bosworth, and has set up his own little bureaucracy separate from the wage and price guidelines program a block away. Blumenthal has been squabbling with Trade Negotiator Robert Strauss. At a Cabinet meeting

last month, the Treasury Secretary accused Strauss of having worked out a sweetheart deal with the textile industry that limits imports, in exchange for its support of the Tokyo Round of tariff reductions. Strauss claims his actions were politically necessary.

The President's top economic advisers are also distressed at the situation. They engaged in some soul searching at a danish-and-coffee breakfast two weeks ago in Blumenthal's Treasury Department dining room. For instance, they criticized themselves for failing to follow through on policy decisions and for having talked for three months about ways to slow down the economy without agreeing on a set of recommendations for the President. Complained one adviser at the table: "We talk and talk and nothing happens."

On the other hand, the Administration's foreign policymaking seems to be functioning better than ever. Carter seems more comfortable with National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. On a picture of the two of them jogging in Jerusalem last month, Carter jokingly wrote: "At least once we're in step." The President is still high on Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, but some aides believe that because of Carter's personal involvement in the Middle East negotiations, Vance alone will not have the clout to keep future talks on track.

Despite Carter's unhappiness with some of the people around him, there is no sign of any imminent major personnel changes. Instead, the President is considering ways to bear down harder on his team and improve performance. Says an aide who has the President's confidence: "If he wants to get re-elected, he's got to have the stomach for being tougher on his people. They've got to do better, and he knows it."